A

SERMON

On Occaſion of the

DEATH

Of the Reverend

OBADIAH HUGHES, D.D.

Who departed this Life *Dec.* 10. 1751.

In the Fifty-ſixth Year of his Age.

PREACHED

To the Congregation of PROTESTANT DISSENTERS, meeting in *Long-Ditch, Weſtminſter.*

By the Rev. JOHN ALLEN, *M. D.*

——— ——— ——— ——— *Smitten Friends*
Are Angels ſent on Errands full of Love:
For Us they languiſh, and for Us they die:
And ſhall they languiſh, ſhall they die in vain?
NIGHT-THOUGHTS.

Publiſhed at the Deſire of the Congregation.

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2 CORINTH. i. 6.

---- Whether we be afflicted ---- or whether we be comforted, it is to your CONSOLATION *and* SALVATION.

AMONG innumerable Inſtances of Divine Wiſdom in the Creation and Government of the World, to a thoughtful and contemplative Mind ariſes this one, that GOD, by the ſame Work of his Hand, and Operation of his Fingers, accompliſhes ſeveral diſtinct Ends. The Works of GOD may be compared to a curiouſly contrived Machine, wherein there is hardly one Wheel that does not perform a Variety of uſeful Movements.

Thus, in the Conſtitution of the material World, inſtead of a diſtinct Sun to ſerve every Planet, the Author of Nature has contrived, that the ſame great Luminary ſhall be the Principle of Light and Life to the whole Syſtem: Nay, upon ſuch Principles of *Unity* (may I not even ſay of *Frugality?*) is the Univerſe conſtructed, that one Planet ſerves another at

ſecond-hand, by communicating a Degree of the Influence by which it ſubſiſts itſelf. Every Part of Nature ſupports, and is ſupported by the reſt; and the whole Frame is linked together by a Chain of mutual Subſerviency and Dependence.

The ſame Meaſures may be obſerved to take place in the Courſe of GOD's *natural* Providence; of which the leaſt Reflection on the Subject will furniſh various Inſtances: But in nothing is this Procedure more remarkable, than in the Courſe of GOD's *moral* Providence, or the Methods he takes to promote Religion in the World. That GOD propoſes to be *known by the Judgments which he executeth*; that Providence moves with moral Views; is obvious to all *who are wiſe, and will obſerve theſe things:* But the Contrivance of GOD, in making his Diſpenſations to *ſome* effectual to the *Conſolation and Salvation* of *others*, is not perhaps ſo much conſidered, as to make a Meditation on the Subject unneceſſary, or (in the Circumſtances of this Congregation) improper.

The Apoſtle in the Text is an Inſtance of what I deſign to inſiſt on: He lets the Chriſtian *Corinthians* know *he had been in great Trouble:* Ver. 8. *We would not, Brethren, have you ignorant of our Trouble, which came to us in* Aſia; *that we were preſſed out of meaſure, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of Life.* Whatever this Trouble might be, he was now happily relieved from it; on which Account he cries

cries out, in a Strain of devout Thankſgiving, *Bleſſed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort, who comforteth us in all our Tribulation*, Ver. 3, 4. The Conſolation he enjoyed under his Trouble, and his Deliverance from it, were, no doubt, very agreeable to him on his own Account; but he conſiders himſelf as a Perſon whoſe Comforts might be very extenſively uſeful; and therefore rejoices in them, as what made him *able to comfort them who are in any Trouble, by the Comfort wherewith he himſelf had been comforted of God: For*, ſays he, *as the Sufferings of Chriſt abound in us* (meaning by theſe the Troubles and Perſecutions he had endured for the Sake of Chriſt and the Goſpel), *ſo alſo our Conſolation aboundeth by Chriſt*, Ver. 4, 5. On the Mention of this, he makes an Obſervation that fully elucidates the Deſign of GOD in all the Variety and Mixture of his Diſpenſations to him: *And whether we be afflicted, it is for your Conſolation and Salvation, which is effectual in enduring the ſame Sufferings which we alſo ſuffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your Conſolation and Salvation.* If ſuch Men as *Paul* had their Troubles and Afflictions, private Chriſtians had no Reaſon to faint under any they met with, they faring no worſe than the firſt Miniſters of Chriſt's Kingdom, and his higheſt Favourites: And if *theſe* were comforted, why might not *thoſe*, who *partook of the ſame Sufferings, be Partakers alſo of the ſame Conſolation?* Beſides, that both the

Comforts and Afflictions the Apoſtles had, the Apoſtles knew how to improve to the Benefit of all thoſe among whom they laboured.

Here then is plainly one Inſtance, wherein the Diſpenſations of GOD to ſome are deſigned for the *Conſolation and Salvation* of others; and, tho' *Paul* was a Man of peculiar Eminence, it does not from thence follow, that GOD's Dealings with Men of a lower Claſs and Character may not be deſigned for our Advantage too. As an Apoſtle, his Character was peculiar; but, as a Chriſtian, he was not alone; and, as a Miniſter of the Goſpel, he was not alone: Nothing therefore hinders, but that the Diſpenſations of GOD to good Men in general, and to good Miniſters in particular (be thoſe Diſpenſations in the Way either of Comfort or Affliction); nothing, I ſay, hinders, but they may each of them be deſigned for our Sakes, and adapted to our Benefit and Advantage.

Accordingly, the Buſineſs of the preſent Diſcourſe ſhall be to trace and point out the great Uſefulneſs of each of theſe Diſpenſations, both in the Caſe of good Men in general, and good Miniſters in particular; and to endeavour to prove, that *whether they be comforted, or whether they be afflicted, it is for our Conſolation and Salvation*; and, when this is done, I ſhall improve the Account to the beſt practical Purpoſes I am able.

Firſt, then, with regard to good Men in general, *whether they be comforted or afflicted, it is for*

for our Benefit and Advantage: And I hope to be able to make this evident, with regard to each of the mentioned Diſpenſations.

I. It is for our Advantage, if they are comforted. That good Men have their Comforts, is a plain and obvious Fact: The Apoſtle, in the Text, ſpeaks of his, at a time when Chriſtianity was under heavy Perſecution; and therefore, in the ordinary State of human Affairs, to ſay, that good Men have none, if he that ſays this is a Stranger to Religion, he is calumnious, and *ſpeaks Evil of things he knows not*; if otherwiſe, he is ungrateful and unexperienced; and both ſpeak what is falſe in Fact. Good Men, it is true, are ſometimes afflicted; but that is only when the wiſe and fatherly Ends of Providence require it ſhould be ſo: If no great Deſigns of GOD make other Procedures neceſſary, his invariable Diſpoſition is to conſult the Eaſe and Comfort of good Men in every thing. *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* Accordingly we often ſee good Men, in all reſpects, as eaſy and happy as the preſent State of Imperfection and Mortality admits; for which indeed a regular Foundation is laid in their Principles and Hopes, and the State and Temper of their Minds. Now undoubtedly all this is primarily for their own Sakes: This is the natural Reward of their Virtue, and exemplary Piety: But GOD deſigns, that their Comforts ſhould be uſeful alſo to the World about

about them, and there are ſeveral Ways in which they are ſo.

Theſe Comforts of good Men may be conſidered as relative to Life, or to Godlineſs, this World or the next; and they are both deſigned by him who gives them for the Benefit of others. Thoſe which have a Reference to this Life give a fair Occaſion for all to obſerve, that if Men take care to pleaſe and approve themſelves to God, he will take good Care of them, and all their Intereſts. This was a Fact ſo evident in the Caſe of *Job* in his Proſperity, that *Satan* made it a Handle for ſuggeſting, that the good Man's Religion was mercenary: *Does* Job *ſerve God for nought? Haſt not thou made a Hedge about him, and about all that he hath on every Side? Thou haſt bleſſed the Work of his Hands, and his Subſtance is increaſed in the Land: But put forth thy Hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy Face.* Job i. 9, 10, 11. GOD accordingly *put forth his Hand*, and very awfully *touched him:* But, to the Shame of the grand Accuſer, *In all this* Job *ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly.* Ver. 22. However, this ſhews the Notoriety of the Fact, that good Men *do not ſerve God for nought.* The People of *Iſrael* are another Inſtance to the ſame Purpoſe: They had engaged themſelves to the Service of their God; and as their Reward and Encouragement, he diſtinguiſhingly bleſt, and did them Good; and it is evident, that he deſigned it a public Inſtruction to Mankind, of his being the Friend and

Patron

Patron of thoſe who ſerved him: Accordingly, *Balaam*, amidſt all his Hatred of that People, and when purſuing a wicked Scheme for their Deſtruction, was obliged to break out, *How goodly are thy Tents, O* Jacob, *and thy Tabernacles, O* Iſrael? *As the Valleys, are they ſpread forth, and as Gardens by the River-ſide. There is no Divination againſt* Jacob, *and no Inchantment againſt* Iſrael: *How ſhall I curſe whom the Lord hath not curſed; and defy whom the Lord hath not defied?* Numb. xxiii. xxiv. So in *Pſ.* xlviii. when the Pſalmiſt had ſaid, *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praiſed, in the City of our* God, *in the Mountain of his Holineſs: Beautiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth is Mount* Zion.—God *is known in her Palaces for a Refuge*; he proceeds to take Notice of the Effect which the View of this had on their neighbouring Nations. *For lo, the Kings were aſſembled, they paſſed by together. They ſaw it, and lo they marvelled; they were troubled, and haſted away. Fear took hold upon them there, and Pain as of a Woman in Travail.* And he cloſes the Pſalm with ſaying, *Let Mount* Zion *rejoice, let the Daughters of* Judah *be glad becauſe of thy Judgments. Walk about* Zion, *and go round about her; tell the Towers thereof; mark ye well her Bulwarks, conſider her Palaces; that ye may tell it to the Generation following. For this* God *is our God for ever and ever; he will be our Guide even unto Death.* It muſt indeed be acknowledged, that as the *Jewiſh* Conſtitution was a Covenant eſtabliſhed principally

principally on temporal Promiſes, GOD's giving to that People a peculiar Share of temporal Bleſſings fell more directly under his Care as their God and King; whereas ſome better thing being provided for us, we may be content that lower Bleſſings ſhould be left (as they are) more at large; yet ſtill they are not ſo left, but that GOD is often pleaſed to ſhew an eſpecial Regard to good Men in theſe Intereſts; and when he does this, it is to let the World ſee how good a Maſter his People ſerve, and to verify his own Aſſurance, that *Godlineſs is profitable to all Things, having Promiſe of the Life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.* And in the general Courſe of Things how can it be otherwiſe? Are not *Wiſdom's Ways Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and all her Paths Peace*, in that Quietneſs and Eaſe of Mind for which thoſe lay a regular Foundation who walk in them? Is not Religion *Health to the Navel, and Marrow to the Bones*, in the Temperance, Sobriety, and due Government of the Paſſions and Appetites, which it inſpires and injoins? Is it not the moſt probable Way of thriving, by the Diligence and conſcientious Induſtry to which it will oblige us, and as it is the only ſure Foundation of that Eſteem and Confidence among Men, which is neceſſary to our tranſacting Affairs in the World with a tolerable Proſpect of Succeſs and Advantage to ourſelves? Bad as the World is, it cannot help having a ſecret Eſteem and Veneration for Men of Conſcience and Religion; and we need go no further

further for the Proof of this than appealing to their Breaſts who hate Religion, and profeſs to deſpiſe good Men. Suppoſe the moſt looſe and wicked Man one could think of was obliged to commit all his worldly Affairs to the Care of one Perſon, and he had Leave to chooſe that Perſon out of whatever Claſs of Men he pleaſed; out of what Claſs of Men would he make his Choice? Would he chooſe a Perſon for ſuch an Office from among thoſe of his own Character, and the dear Companions of his licentious Hours? No! He would diſtruſt that Man's Fidelity to him, whom he ſaw falſe to GOD, and to his own Soul; and however he might like him for an *Aſſociate*, he would chooſe for a *Truſtee* a Man of Conſcience and Religion.

But the principal Deſign of GOD in appointing to his People the Comforts I am now ſpeaking of, is, that Mankind may be inſtructed by an Obſervation of the Manner in which they enjoy and uſe them.

It is a Reproach upon Fools, that their Proſperity deſtroys them, by nouriſhing the Corruptions and Vices that are ruinous to their Souls: It has no ſuch Effect on good Men: In all the Fulneſs and Plenty of worldly Bleſſings, vigorous Health, high Reputation, and an affluent Fortune, they preſerve a Senſe of their Unworthineſs, Dependence, and Obligations to GOD; at the ſame time that they have the trueſt Reliſh of lower Bleſſings, their Affections are placed on Heaven; they are

mindful of their Mortality, and the Account they muſt give of their Stewardſhip; they *uſe this World ſo as not to abuſe it*; and endeavour that, in ſome Proportion to the Talents GOD has given them, Mankind may be the better for them. Let it not be ſaid, that I have drawn a Copy that has no living Original to anſwer it; *Job* ſpeaks of the Manner in which he had employed his Proſperity; and from the known Integrity of the Man, and the Solemnity of his Appeal, we may be ſure it was his very Character—*That he had not withheld the Poor from his Deſire, or cauſed the Eyes of the Widow to fail—Nor eaten his Morſel alone, but the Fatherleſs had eaten thereof: That his Loins bleſſed him; and he was warmed with the Fleece of his Sheep.—That he had not made Gold his Hope, nor the fine Gold his Confidence; nor rejoiced becauſe his Wealth was great, and becauſe his Hand had gotten much*, &c. Job xxxi. And like him in the prevailing Diſpoſition of his Mind every good Man is and muſt be in the Poſſeſſion and Uſe of the Bleſſings of Providence; like him humble, compaſſionate, and uſeful. How great a Bleſſing to the World ſuch an one is, all Mankind may ſee; but he is withall a great Inſtruction; hither let the Proud, the Senſual, the ſordidly Covetous come, and, as in a Glaſs, obſerve, and learn to correct, the ſeveral Deformities of their Souls; here may all learn in what Manner they ought to uſe the Gifts of GOD's Bounty, and be excited to employ them well, by obſerving how

amiable

amiable and how uſeful ſuch a Temper makes all thoſe who are poſſeſſed of it. But I have dwelt too long on the Comforts of an inferior Kind, when I have Comforts to mention of a ſo much higher Order; thoſe I mean which good Men enjoy when they poſſeſs that Peace and Joy for which true Religion in the Heart lays a ſolid Foundation; and theſe are *eſpecially* for the Conſolation and Salvation of others.

How do profane and ungodly Men feel themſelves within? *There is no Peace (ſaith my God) to the Wicked. The Wicked are like the troubled Sea that cannot reſt, whoſe Waters caſt up Mire and Dirt.* Iſa. lvii. 20, 21. Their diſorderly Paſſions create an inteſtine Confuſion and War; a War that nothing can put an End to but the Grace that ſubdues them; and that this will end it, let thoſe bear Witneſs whom GOD by the powerful Influence of Religion has lifted up into the happy Regions of Peace and Serenity; while wicked Men lie below, buffetted by the Storms which their own diſordered Hearts have raiſed. Such Comforts are for the Benefit of others, to ſignify where they are to ſeek for Peace, and in what Way they may be ſure to find it.

Beſides this Peace, which is the inſeparable Companion of Religion, I may mention another which is often reflected from it: There is a Stage of Religion to which *ſome* good Men have arrived, in which all their Doubts and Fears have been happily removed, and they have been almoſt as fully perſuaded of the

Safety of their eternal State as of their own Exiſtence: This is one of the ſweeteſt Comforts the Soul can enjoy; happy the Man who has it on juſt Grounds! and if there is a Comfort in the World that is adapted to the Conſolation and Salvation of others, it is this: It is a Teſtimony to all Mankind of the Wiſdom and Importance of Religion; as what gives a *Joy that a Stranger intermeddles not with*, a Peace *that the World cannot give*, and which (tho' they will not pay the Price which good Men have given) all Men would be glad to have: It is alſo a Comfort particularly adapted to the Conſolation of thoſe pious Perſons who are yet in Suſpenſe about their Sincerity and Acceptance with GOD; as it gives them a Taſte of what they may hope to enjoy in a perſevering Courſe of Faith, and Chriſtian Obedience. It is no very uncommon thing to find Perſons, whom in the Judgment of Charity we have Reaſon to think very ſincere, labouring under dark and gloomy Fears about themſelves; and, whatever is the Reaſon of it, theſe Fears are ſometimes ſo obſtinate and unmanageable, that all we urge from the plain Tenor of the Goſpel-Covenant, will not relieve and ſubdue them: Well! an Example may do what an Argument would not: Let ſuch Perſons look at thoſe whom GOD has comforted with the Comforts I am ſpeaking of; how adapted is ſuch a View to give them Conſolation? Among thoſe whom GOD has comforted, it is not improbable they will find ſome that were once in their Condition;

dition; but they have happily overgrown their Fears, and ſpend their Lives in the Enjoyment of a regular Peace and Satisfaction of Mind with regard to their everlaſting State: The Conſolation which one good Man has is adapted to give to another the Conſolation he wants; it encourages him to hope, tremulous and heſitating as he may now be, that in time he may enjoy the wiſhed for Bleſſing; and as he finds himſelf to ſucceed his Fellow Chriſtian in his gloomy Seaſons, that he may ſuceed him too in his Peace and Joy. But,

II. As it is for the Benefit of others that good Men are *comforted*, it is for that alſo they are *afflicted*. In order to prove and illuſtrate this, let us place before our Eyes as lively an Idea as Experience and Obſervation will enable us to form, of a good Man under GOD's afflicting Hand: I remember an Heathen ſays, that ſuch a Spectacle is worthy of GOD himſelf: I am ſure, if any thing in the World is uſeful and advantageous to us, it is ſuch a Sight.

And here, before we go any deeper, the Sight of a good Man under any great and heavy Affliction has this Inſtruction (needful enough to correct the Malevolence and haſty Cenſures of Mankind), that a good Man *may* be afflicted; and that Exemption from great Troubles is not eſſential to Sincerity, and Acceptance and Favour with GOD; here being an Inſtance of GOD's *chaſtening one whom he loveth, and ſcourging a Son whom he receiveth.* The poor

Sufferer himſelf may, in this cool and ſober Seaſon, *lay his Hand on his Mouth, and his Mouth in the Duſt:* His Afflictions may bring many Sins to his Remembrance, and lead him into many very humbling Reflections; but theſe Reflections, however proper for a Man to make for himſelf in the Privacies of Devotion, it is not ſo decent for others to make for him; or rather (and to ſpeak what is commonly done by hard-hearted Man, who knows no Meaſures in judging) it is not fit for us to pronounce a Perſon a bad Man, and a Hypocrite, becauſe he humbles himſelf before GOD as a *Sinner*. It was on this Point that the Diſpute between *Job* and his Three Friends turned: He was ever ready to acknowlege himſelf an imperfect ſinful Creature. *If I ſay I am perfect, the Saying would prove me perverſe.* They, on the contrary, would maintain, that there was ſome ſecret Wickedneſs for which GOD was correcting him by ſuch uncommon Afflictions; but you know how ſeverely GOD at laſt rebuked them for their uncharitable Cenſures.

Again, and as the Conſequence of the former, the Afflictions which good Men meet with are a Warning to us to expect the ſame, and ought to teach us not to be ſhocked at them whenever they come. "Do I ſee one "whom Chriſt loveth, ſick, in Pain, bereaved "of one Comfort, another made a Bitterneſs "to him? My beſt Bleſſings, O my Soul, are "precarious too; and I have an Inſtruction to

"fit

" ſit more looſe to all created Good. Can I " expect to be exempted, or dare I murmur, " or ſpeak a Word, if I am not exempted? " GOD deals by me but as he deals with the " beſt of Men, with thoſe whom he loves " now, and will make fully happy in a future " Life and World." Nor do I know a ſtronger natural Foundation for the Belief and Hope of a future Life and World, than what ariſes from the Conſideration of the afflicted State of good Men; eſpecially when theſe Two things have fallen in together, that their Piety and their Troubles have been each of them ſignal and extraordinary.

Tho' undoubtedly one of the beſt rational and moral Arguments for a future State is what ariſes from natural Good and Evil not being exactly proportioned to Mens moral and religious Characters (which it ought to be, on the Suppoſition of no State after this Life); yet I think on this Argument things have been carried too far, and Suppoſitions have been made, that all things come alike to all in the general Courſe of Things; or, that if any Difference is made, the beſt of Men have a harder Lot than the worſt; which I take to be contrary to Fact and Experience. If we conſider the Eaſe of Mind and Conſcience, the Eſteem among Men, and the various other Bleſſings that commonly fall to the Share of the Good, and, on the other hand, the Miſeries that purſue the Wicked; often Contempt and Poverty; always the Torture of raging and ungoverned

ungoverned Paſſions, and the Stings and Laſhes of a wounded guilty Conſcience; we ſhall have, I apprehend, little Reaſon to ſay GOD diſpenſes unequally, even in this World. Thoſe natural Rewards of Virtue, and Puniſhments of Vice, ſtand as Evidences of a preſent righteous and wiſe Adminiſtration; and loudly ſpeak, that *there is a* GOD *that judges in the Earth* as well as in the Heavens.

But what I ground my Argument upon are a few excepted and peculiar Caſes that have been in the World, where the natural Rewards of Virtue and Religion have been ſuſpended and interrupted; and while wicked Men have had *all that Heart could wiſh*, to the Righteous *the Waters of a full Cup have been wrung out.* Has there never been a Perſon who, inſtead of the Veneration and Eſteem he has deſerved, has met with contemptuous and hard Uſage? Who, tho' ſtrictly temperate and regular, has fallen into ill Health, and painful Diſeaſes? An eaſy and quiet Conſcience will enable a Man, indeed, to ſuſtain thoſe Infirmities; but, to put the Caſe as ſtrongly as I can, what if the Spirit of this Man is wounded too? Not by Guilt (that the Suppoſition does not admit); but there may be a melancholy Blood, a conſtitutional Fear and Depreſſion, a diſturbed Imagination, that may take away the whole Pleaſure of a Man's Exiſtence, and without a guilty Conſcience produce all the Diſtreſs and Miſery with which a guilty Conſcience can be attended, and tempt a poor Creature *to chooſe*

Strangling

Strangling and Death, rather than Life—Or if all theſe Diſtreſſes ſhould be thought too complicated and great to meet together in any one Perſon, let us turn our Eyes to a Caſe of Fact, I mean that of the Apoſtles and primitive Martyrs, who were made a *Gazing-ſtock to the World, counted the Off-ſcouring of all Things, endured Stripes, Impriſonments,* and every Species of Cruelty their bloody Perſecutors could invent; and all for the Sake of Chriſt; and that they *might obtain a better Reſurrection*: The Treatment they met with in ſo glorious a Cauſe gave them Hopes and Expectations of a Time of Recompence; for, ſays *Paul, If in this Life only we had Hope in Chriſt, we were of all Men moſt miſerable.* And they certainly reaſoned rightly: GOD is the *Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him:* In the Caſes, the excepted Caſes I have mentioned, he has not manifeſted his diſtinguiſhing Regard to them; he will therefore do it in another World.

Now in this View good Men are afflicted for the Sake of others; in proportion as their Religion, and their Afflictions, taken together, have been great and ſingular, they ſtand forth as Witneſſes, that Death does not put an End to the Exiſtence of Man. And perhaps an all-wiſe GOD, in permitting ſome moſt excellent Servants of his to be above meaſure afflicted, may deſign to give us certain Facts to reaſon upon for the Confirmation of our Faith in this moſt important Article.

But the principal Advantage of the Afflictions of good Men to others, riſes from the inſtructive and uſeful Obſervations we may make of the manner in which they bear them. I will not ſay, that very good Chriſtians, under ſome Afflictions, have never diſcovered a Degree of culpable Impatience: The Paſſions of weak and frail Nature obtain ſometimes a temporary Dominion, and, for a while, overpower Reaſon, and Religion too: But, when that Tumult ſubſides, as to the ſettled Judgment of their Minds, they are fully convinced of the Equity, Wiſdom, and fatherly Goodneſs of GOD, in his ſevereſt Diſpenſations; they patiently ſubmit to his Pleaſure; and, by degrees, Submiſſion advances into a full Complacency in whatever GOD has been pleaſed to do.

This, beſides being one of the loveliеſt Sights in the World, is the moſt inſtructive: The Duties of an afflicted State are made plain; and, being taught by living Examples, are taught, in the moſt lively and impreſſive way: Obſerving what good Men afflicted have been enabled to do, we are encouraged to try the ſame Principles and Hopes to enable us to do the ſame. "I ſee what the great Cloud of "Witneſſes have ſuffered, how they have be-"haved, and by what they have been ſup-"ported! Look, O my Soul, to them, and "learn of them, that I may not be weary and "faint in my Mind."

Laſtly, we ſee good Men going thro' the laſt, the moſt awful, and the moſt trying Scene of

all; that, I mean, of dying: And here, if the Principles of Religion operate regularly, and the Chriſtian dies like himſelf, there is not a Scene in this World more uſeful. The Caſe will be in ſome ſuch manner as this: There may be ſome ſhort Reluctance of Nature to the Encounter: There was the Struggle of a Moment in our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and therefore it muſt be quite innocent; but this will ſoon be over-ruled by Obedience to GOD, and higher Views. *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The Chriſtian will look back on his paſt Tranſactions with GOD in the way of Religion, and the Series of the Life that is now coming to a Cloſe; and tho' he will ſee many Sins and Follies, yet none of which GOD has not given him true Repentance; and he will, upon the Whole, have *the Teſtimony of a good Conſcience, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, not by fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, he has had his Converſation in this World:* All Pretence of Merit he will at the ſame time baniſh and abhor; reckon himſelf leſs than the leaſt of all GOD's Mercies, much more ſo of that ineſtimable Glory which he humbly expects and hopes for; but he believes in Jeſus, who purchaſed that Glory, and thro' whom *the Gift of God is eternal Life*; and *knowing in whom he has believed, and that he is able to take Care of what he commits to him*, he truſts his Soul, and everlaſting All, to him, and calmly lays down his Head, *looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal Life.*

This is the Sight we ſee; this is the good Man's End. O when can any thing be ſeen in this World more for the Honour and Credit of Religion? Who can go away from ſuch a Scene without a Conviction, that there muſt be ſomething grand and ſubſtantial in Principles that can carry a Man thro' ſuch an Extremity with Serenity and Peace? We own, indeed, that there have been another Sort of People, that have paſſed thro' Death with great *Hardineſs*, and what ſome have called *Courage*; and theſe Inſtances are often mentioned with a View of blaſting the Credit we would reflect upon Religion by *marking the perfect Man, and beholdin the Upright, that the End of that Man is Peace:* But, if the Inſtances be attended to, what will that Peace be found to be, in which ſome bad Men have died? Nothing but the ſad Fruit either of Unbelief or Stupidity. Let us but ſuppoſe a wicked Man to believe and think of theſe Matters; then let us draw the Curtains of his dying Bed, what ſhall we then find and hear? Inſtead of the ſweet Voice of Peace, nothing but heavy Mournings, and bitter Soul-tormenting Reflections. The dying Saint's Apprehenſions of theſe things are lively and ſerious, more ſo perhaps than ever they were in the World, and yet he has Peace; nay, has it for the very Reaſon that they are ſo. Men muſt be even harden'd to a reprobate Inſenſibility, that can laugh at theſe things; and ſtupid beyond Conception, whom ſuch Scenes do not awaken to ſerious Preparation for their own awful Change.

Having

Having thus ſhewn, that both the Comforts and Afflictions of good Men in general are for the Benefit and Advantage of others, I muſt do the ſame with regard to the Comforts and Afflictions of good Miniſters in particular: Which was the Second Part in the Diviſion of my Subject: And a few Words will be ſufficient on this Head.

Have good and worthy Miniſters any conſiderable Share of the Bleſſings of Providence, ſuch as Health, and active chearful Spirits, a good Portion of the Wealth of this World, with proper Abilities and Furniture of Mind for their Employment? Theſe will be uſed for the Benefit and Comfort of others: Their Riches, in generous Hoſpitality, and Offices of charitable Beneficence; their Health, and miniſterial Abilities, in aſſiduous Diligence in the Buſineſs of their Function: Have they the diviner Comforts of Religion? Their Labour, and their Lives, will ſavour of them; and they will do all they can to *comfort others with the ſame Comforts with which they are comforted of God:* Or,

Have they Afflictions? Theſe have a Tendency to do their Souls Good, to heighten the Tincture of Serioufneſs on their own Spirits; and the more they have of this, the more will their Labours, and their Lives (by both of which they ought to preach), exhibit it; and you will enjoy the Benefit of their Religion.

Have

Have we, in common with you, Shocks in our Conſtitutions, weakening and wearing Diſorders, that put us in mind of the Nearneſs of Death, and an eternal World? With our own Hearts full of thoſe Thoughts, how natural is it that we ſhould call you to a ſpeedy Preparation? *Be ye alſo ready.* Upon the Brink of Eternity, we cannot talk of the Concerns of it with Coldneſs and Indifference; we ſhall *preach* as dying Men, and we may hope, that you will *hear* as ſuch.

Are our moſt valued Comforts embitter'd or removed? Previouſly to your obſerving the Impreſſion which theſe things make on our Spirits, you may ſee the precarious Nature of your own: But it may be hoped, that our *Tribulation will teach us Patience, Patience Experience*; and *that* Experience, communicated to you, will be for your Benefit. Thus you may be taught at our Coſt; and the Loſſes we ſuſtain in one way, may be your Gain in another.

You have your Afflictions of various Kinds, and (as it is our Office) you expect that we ſhould pity, pray for you, and ſpeak a Word in Seaſon to you. All the Books and Learning in the World will not ſo effectually furniſh us for this, as Experience obtained by a Fellowſhip with you in the ſame kind of Sufferings. And, really, one would ſometimes be ready to think, that our great Maſter ſaw, that our Qualification for our Office could not be complete without ſome Education in the School of Affliction;

fliction; for commonly a large Share of theſe Sort of Exerciſes falls to our Lot; ſuch as hath bowed the Spirit of many of us almoſt to the Ground: But we hope we do not repine at theſe things. Pray GOD we may be made better by all, and then both you and we ſhall reap the Benefit.

Finally, we your Miniſters, in our Turn, die, and are called from off our Labours. *Our Fathers*, our Brethren, *where are they?* If we have lived like Chriſtians and Miniſters, it may be hoped we ſhall die ſo too, with Reſignation and Peace of Mind; which will be ſome Credit to the Doctrine we have preached. This is inſtructive, and encouraging of you in the Path we have been recommending to your Choice: And our Death, abſtracted from the manner in which we meet it, is a lively Leſſon to you of Mortality, and a Call to prepare for your own. And the more eminent any whom GOD has removed have been in miniſterial Abilities, Sanctity of Manners, and Uſefulneſs in Life, the ſtronger is the Conviction you ought to have, that *there is no Diſcharge in this War.*

Thus I have finiſhed what I propoſed to ſpeak to; pointed out, in the beſt manner I could, the Uſefulneſs of the Diſpenſations both of Comforts and Afflictions, whether thoſe who are under them are good Men in general, or good Miniſters in particular; and proved, that both the one and the other are for general Advantage:

vantage: And now I ſhall cloſe all with a Reflection or two, by way of Application, on what has been ſaid. And,

1. This Account of the Deſign of GOD in his Diſpenſations, ſhould be conſidered as a ſolemn Call to all of us, to act as it becomes us under them: We ſhould conſider ourſelves as *Lights in the World*, and *a City ſet on a Hill*; Perſons whom GOD places in a conſpicuous Point of Light, with a View of making a ſignificant Uſe of us. A right and proper Behaviour under the various Diſpenſations of God towards us, takes in a conſiderable Part of our Chriſtian Duty; and proportionally large is the Truſt, of the Glory of GOD, the Credit of Religion, and the Benefit of Mankind, that is put into our Hands. How nearly then are we concerned to act in Character? and how careful ſhould we be not to obſtruct, but to farther, GOD's wiſe and good Intentions as much as we are able?

If we ſhould be comforted of GOD, by the Poſſeſſion of valuable and important Bleſſings, and with thoſe ſhould be ſenſual, ſupercilious, and uſeleſs to thoſe Intereſts of Mankind which we are capable of promoting; beſides our perſonal Unfaithfulneſs, we ſhould inſtruct others in nothing but what would be diſhonourable to GOD, and injurious and hurtful to the World; good Men would be diſcouraged, and the Wicked hardened in their Impiety.

Much of the ſame ſort would be the Effect of our ill-ſupported and unimproved Afflictions: Our

Our querulous Impatience, our Wearineſs and Fainting, would give ſad Occaſion to the Enemies of the Law to blaſpheme, and to ſay that Religion was nothing but a Rhapſody of great Words.

II. As both the Comforts and Afflictions of all good Men are deſigned for our Advantage, this ſhould teach us to endeavour to gather up all the Benefit to ourſelves, from both, that we poſſibly can.----When good Men have done their Duty, in making their Light to ſhine, then commences ours, which is to look up and mark it, that, *ſeeing their good Works, we may glorify our Father who is in Heaven*; remembring that none of theſe Things work like a Charm, but like other moral Cauſes on Minds that are wrought into a fit Diſpoſition to receive and attend to them.

With this Diſpoſition would I recommend it to you, to conſider what I ſhall now ſay concerning that very worthy Man, your late Miniſter, the Rev. Dr. OBADIAH HUGHES, of whom it has pleaſed God to bereave you by Death. Were I to follow the Impulſes of my own Heart, I could take a gloomy Pleaſure in expatiating on his Character and Excellencies, with which, by a daily Converſe, and moſt endearing Intimacy with him in the laſt Part of his Life, I had an Opportunity to be acquainted——His Gravity and Seriouſneſs of Spirit, ſo remarkable, that I believe a light and frothy Word was never heard to drop from his Mouth; and yet all without the leaſt Tincture

of Severity and Moroſeneſs——His paſſionately warm Deſire to do Good, and with that View cultivating thoſe Parts of religious Knowlege, which were moſt directly calculated to that great End; with a noble Neglect of thoſe more abſtruſe and dry Speculations, that were either above the Reach of the Mind of Man, or for which human Life was too ſhort, or that, if maſtered, would have done neither him nor his Hearers any ſubſtantial Service.: Affectionately-practical Preaching was his Aim; and it was his Talent equally with any Miniſter I have met with——His Affability, Courteſy, and Condeſcenſion to Perſons of inferior Circumſtances in the World, in which he ſhewed the true *Gentleman* as well as the *Chriſtian*——His Charity to deſerving Perſons of very different Sentiments from himſelf in ſome Matters of Controverſy, and Readineſs to ſupply their Neceſſities, of which I could produce many Inſtances.——Nor ſhould I forget his Deſcent from a Line of worthy Miniſters, famous in their Generation for their Services, and for their *Sufferings too* in the Cauſe of Liberty and pure Religion; a Line which we can trace up unbroken to his Great Grandfather incluſive; beſides his collateral Relation to others, in whom the World would excuſe a Man for glorying a little, when they underſtand, that the ſublime Mr. *John Howe*, and the late pious and eloquent Preacher Dr. *Samuel Wright*, were two of that Number.

But

But in all this, and a great deal more, I ſuppoſe I am anticipated by my true Fellow-Mourner *, who ſtood in this Place the laſt Lord's Day; who knew the Deceaſed longer, tho' hardly I think better, than I did: Tho' I cannot help grieving at my worthy Brother's cruel Delicacy, in not ſuffering his Account to paſs beyond the Limits of theſe Walls. Men of Dr. *Hughes*'s good Spirit, and great Uſefulneſs, are too thinly ſown in our World, not to make it deſirable that they ſhould live a *little while* in the Memory of Survivors: All *Iſrael* ought to know, and be put on improving, a Loſs that all *Iſrael* will long feel, and that will not be repaired ſoon.

But I will ſay no more of this valuable Man than what ariſes ſpontaneouſly to my Thoughts out of the Subject of my Diſcourſe, and no more than I believe has riſen to your Minds in hearing it.

In him we have ſeen a good Man, and a good Miniſter——comforted, and —— afflicted ——In Reſult of a liberal Education, bleſt with Learning and Accompliſhments for (what himſelf ever thought) the nobleſt Work in the World; bleſt with a Heart that loved Religion, and the Souls of Men; and with that View ever laying Plans to promote their Conſolation and Salvation:——By a peculiar Diſpoſition of Providence, and the Favour of an excellent Lady, who by his living in her Family had

* The Rev. Dr. *Lawrence*.

had been long a Witneſt of his Piety, his Prudence, his Humanity, good Nature, and general Worthineſs—bleſt with an ample Fortune:—And have not all theſe Comforts been employed for the Benefit of others? Aſk Thouſands of ſerious People in the City of *London*, who had his occaſional Labours; in *Southwark*, where was his firſt ſtated Service; in *Weſtminſter*, where was his laſt; they will ſay——It was for ours. He had taſted largely of the Comforts of Religion: Speaking of them was his darling Topic: They beamed in his lovely Countenance, and ſometimes ſtreamed in his weeping Eyes; and many, I believe, *have been comforted* by him *with the Comforts wherewith he has been comforted of* GOD. For myſelf, I will ſay, I have ſpent with him, beſides many innocently agreeable, many ſweetly devout Hours, in which laſt the pious Warmth of his Heart has raiſed the Coldneſs of mine; Hours which I hope I ſhall remember, and be the better for, as long as I live. Having the Advantage of an ample Fortune, it rather quickened than abated his Diligence in his beloved Work; preaching conſtantly twice every Lord's Day; beſides many other occaſional Engagements, for which he was always ready: And that this was Matter of Conſcience with him, appears to me from a Word that dropped from his Mouth in my Hearing, not many Weeks before his Death. On my urging him to decline preaching above once a Day, in Conſideration of his growing Weakneſſes (and which very few but would

would have thought a ſufficient Diſpenſation from preaching at all), he ſaid to me, with weeping Eyes, *He was afraid of being ungrateful to the* GOD *who had done ſuch great Things for him.* I hope there is ſomething in this that may *redeem* the Miniſtry from the mean Imputation, that all our Preaching is only for Hire, and continued no longer than we cannot ſubſiſt without it. And how he employed his Fortune for the Comfort of others—the many poor Miniſters, their Widows and Orphans, who have been relieved either by his Bounty, or thro' his Hands, and the charitable Legacy he has left by his Will to be diſtributed among them, will ſufficiently tell.

We have ſeen him in the latter Part of his Life—afflicted—by repeated Strokes of Providence on his own Family, in the Deaths of thoſe who were dear to him as his own Soul, and the gradual Declenſion of his Health: All theſe Things ſenſibly diſengaged him from this World; the Laſt made him conſider himſelf as *breaking up* (it was his own Word): And how ſuitable to ſuch Apprehenſions, how monitory (I had almoſt ſaid ominous) of a ſpeedy Change, ſome of his laſt Subjects, and ſome of his laſt Words in this Pulpit, were—many now preſent well know.

His Death, after all, was almoſt ſudden (as he uſed to wiſh his might be); and in his Removal, the World loſt a truly valuable and a very extenſively uſeful Man.

He

He taught you of this Congregation as GOD had taught him, by his Word, and the Dispensations of his Providence to himself. Remember his Instructions; and remember he will give you no more than what by being dead he will speak in your Recollection of what he was, and your Improvement of it. May GOD make what you have seen and heard of him, his Comforts and Afflictions, his Preaching, his Life, and his Death, effectual to the Consolation and Salvation of many here.

FINIS.